of Stone, Jaipur has been selected as Nodal Agency for implementation of the project. A Neem Project at Jhalawar and a Vetiver Project at Dholpur are under implementation in the state of Rajasthan. The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (NSIC) operates various Schemes like Hire Purchase of Machines, Composite Term Loan, Raw Material Assistance, Integrated Marketing Support Programme, Government Stores Purchase Programmes etc. Thus, the Central Government is supporting and supplementing the efforts of the State Government for the development of small and tiny sector in the State.

Storage / Transport of Foodgrains

†*379. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent by the Food Corporation of India on purchase, storage and transportation for per quintal of foodgrains during 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and as on date;

(b) whether the cost of transportation and storage of foodgrains is continuously increasing; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken by Government to contain this trend?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) The expenditure incurred by FCI on acquisition and distribution of foodgrains which, *inter alia*, includes expenditure on purchase, storage and transportation is as under:

(Rs. per qtl.)

	2000-01 (RE)		2001-02 (RE)		2002-03 (BE)	
	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice	Wheat	Rice
Acquisition cost	703.61	995.50	739.13	1052.66	757.64	1072.69
Distribution cost	126.03	152.57	132.17	151.69	121.52	133.68

(b) and (c) The aggregate cost of transportation and storage of foodgrains is increasing due to inflationary impact and higher volumes of procurement necessitating higher transactional expenses.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The steps taken by FCI to control costs include, *inter alia*, reduction in rail demurrage charges as well as in shortages in grain handling, better storage capacity utilization and reduction in administrative overheads.

Recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee

†*380. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to implement the recommendations of Justice Talwar Commitee with regard to status, pension, trade union facilities for three lakh employees engaged in postal services in rural areas;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) if not, what remedial measures Government are considering in the interest of these employees?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) The Justice Talwar Committee (JTC), constituted to examine the system of Extra Departmental Agency in the Department of Posts, their conditions of employment wage structure etc., made various recommendations in this regard, which, *inter-alia*, covered issues like their status, grant of pension etc. There was no specific recommendation regarding the grant of trade union facilities to them.

2. The recommendations of the JTC were examined and orders issued on 17.12.98 in full and final settlement of these recommendations and all related pending issues. This resulted in 69% enchancement in the benefits given to the 3,10,269 Extra Departmental Agents now called Gramin Dak Sevaks. The benefits given included post employment benefit to be paid at the time of discharge from employment at the age of 65 years or on death of the Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS), in terms of a lump sum severance amount of Rs. 20,000/- to those who have completed 15 to 20 years of employment, and Rs. 30,000/- to those who have completed over 20 years of employment. The ex-gratia gratuity admissible to them was also enchanced from Rs. 6000/- to Rs. 18,000/-.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.